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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

IN THE

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

IN

CHINA

A PRELIMINARY REPORT



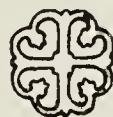
E Barclay W. B. ed.

Joint Committee on Religious Education in Foreign Fields

The Board of Foreign Missions The Board of Education
740 Rush Street, Chicago, Ill.

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INTRODUCTION

When the period of field service in the Orient, from which I have just returned (May 1, 1929), was planned, China was not included. It did not then appear that the time was propitious. Arriving in Shanghai, however, en route to Malaya, certain possibilities were presented. The Eastern Asia Central Conference at its meeting held January 7-14, 1928, had voted: "That a Committee be appointed . . . to prepare a program of religious education for the next quadrennium." The committee constituted under this authorization had not met. The bishops in China suggested the possibility of a meeting of this committee for organization, conference, and preparation of the program for which it was authorized, preceding a proposed meeting of the China Executive Board. This seemed a Providential opening. Accordingly, in conference with Rev. Samson S. Ding, formerly Associate Secretary of Religious Education for China, and more recently Secretary of Religious Education for the Foochow Area, an Inquiry on religious education in China was prepared and sent to sixty persons, known to be specially interested and informed concerning religious education, distributed throughout ten Conferences in China of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Slightly more than one-half this number of persons were represented in the returns. The replies received, brought together in a single document, formed the principal basis of discussion in the meeting of the committee.

The Committee met in the Missions Building, Shanghai, China, and continued in session for five days, Feb. 26—Mch. 2, 1929. The following members of the Committee were present: Mrs. E. F. Brewster (Hinghwa); Rev. Fred R. Brown (Kiangsi); Rev. Samson S. Ding (Foochow); Rev. Ling Guong-ing (Foochow); Dr. F. S. Kao (North China); Miss Roxy Lefforge (Foochow); Rev. Handel Lee (Central China); Dr. S. H. Liljestrand (Chengtu); Rev. I. H. Liu (North China); Miss Chung Mei-lien (Central China); Rev. R. C. Su (Yenping); Rev. H. I. Wang (Shantung); Rev. S. Yu (South Fukien). Bishop L. J. Birney attended as many of the sessions as possible. He expressed very great interest in the conference, regretted that the urgency of preparation for the meeting of the Executive Board the following week prevented continuous attendance, and tendered his assistance in every way. His counsel at a number of the sessions was invaluable and was very much appreciated by all. Miss Edith Fredericks, of the W. F. M. S. and Miss T. C. Kwan, of the National Christian Council, were present throughout the conference. In addition Dr. C. S. Miao, Secretary of Religious Education of the National Christian Educational Association; Dr. E. C. Lobenstine, Secretary of the National Christian Council; Rev. Donald Fan of the Church of Christ in China; and Dr. R. Y. Lo, Editor of the Chinese Christian Advocate, were invited, and were present a part of the time. Samson S. Ding was elected temporary Chairman of the Committee on Religious Education. The writer served as Chairman of the Conference Group throughout. As thus constituted, the group consisted of twenty-one persons, of whom thirteen were Chinese.

The report which follows is based partly upon the returns to the Inquiry mentioned above and partly upon the discussions of the conference. It also

contains some personal judgments. Statements within quotation marks are quoted verbatim and in practically every case the name of the person making the statement is contained in the writer's memoranda. The formal outcome of the conference is to be found in the *Program of Religious Education for the Methodist Episcopal Church in China, 1928-31*, which accompanies and constitutes a part of this report.

It should be understood that the statement which follows is merely a preliminary survey. The judgments expressed are not final; they are tentative only, subject to revision in the light of further inquiry and study. That difference of opinion exists on some of the points is fully realized. As a tentative, introductory statement it is hoped that the document may be suggestive and stimulating to many engaged in the sacrificial service of the Christian enterprise in China. While the report is in some measure critical it will be noted that the critical element is constructive and for the most part comes directly from those who are themselves in immediate contact with the situation.

740 Rush St., Chicago, Ill.
May, 1929.

Wade Crawford Barclay.

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training at present is by the schools.

- b. Some schools are rendering exceptional service in training leaders, but
 - c. Other schools are doing very little.
 - d. There is a growing demand that the schools shall become more effective in this particular.
 - e. Various methods of training are used.
- (3) Well qualified Chinese teachers of religious education in Middle Schools are very scarce.
 - (4) More and better curriculum materials are required.
 - (5) A need is felt for larger opportunity of influence through association.

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- (1) The present situation affecting young people's work in the churches is extremely unsatisfactory:
 - a. There are very few young people in the churches.
 - b. The students in the schools are very critical of the church.
 - c. Many former Epworth Leagues no longer exist.
- (2) There appears to be a lack of enthusiasm for the Epworth League:
 - a. Its form of organization and program are too foreign.
 - b. When Epworth Leagues existed in considerable number they were not composed of young people.
 - c. The Epworth League meeting, as a rule, simply duplicates the morning preaching service.
- (3) Yet there is a conviction that a separate organization for young people, apart from the Sunday school is needed:
 - a. This is not a unanimous judgment.
- (4) Churches should organize Young People's Departments.
- (5) Distinctive helps on young people's work are needed.

VIII. LEADERSHIP TRAINING..... 14

- (1) A few local churches maintain training classes.
- (2) In some Conferences occasional training institutes are conducted:
 - a. The District is usually the area unit for these institutes.
 - b. Some good results are in evidence.
 - c. There is very great need for more of these training institutes and local church training classes.
 - d. There is need also for standardization.
- (3) A beginning has been made in the holding of Summer Schools.
- (4) The need for a different type of training conference is recognized.
- (5) Some special training groups for mothers are maintained.
- (6) There is need for additional textbooks, particularly in specialization subjects.

IX. SPECIAL CURRICULUM PROBLEMS..... 15

- (1) General agreement is expressed with the Jerusalem Conference Findings on indigenous curricula:
 - a. The problem presented is perplexing.

- b. Study, research, and experimentation are required.
 - c. Centers of original research and study must be established.
 - d. Laboratories for experimentation and testing are likewise required.
 - e. Chinese scholars of creative ability are needed to lead in the movement.
 - f. The work should be carried forward under inter-denominational auspices.
- (2) Current progress in curriculum construction should not be interfered with by this long-time process.

X. **ORGANIZATION FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION
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- (1) Progress is being made in the development both of organization and program:
 - a. The authorization and organization of the Committee on Religious Education again provides an All-China organization.
 - b. Conference Boards are organized in nine Conferences.
 - c. The programs of the Conference Boards represent a gradual growth in effectiveness.
- (2) A more complete Conference Board organization is recommended.

XI. **INTERDENOMINATIONAL COOPERATION**19

- (1) The Methodist Episcopal Church in China stands for cooperation.
- (2) The functions of the National Christian Council and of the China Christian Educational Association are limited:
 - a. The former interprets its functions as advisory only.
 - b. The field of the latter is restricted to the schools.
- (3) The China Sunday School Union is rendering very limited service:
 - a. Its policies and plans are not determined by representatives of the Churches.
 - b. Its lesson materials are unsatisfactory.
 - c. It is rendering practically no service in leadership training and the promotion of improved methods.
- (4) The suggestion has been made that a new interdenominational organization be formed.

XII. **IN THE INTEREST OF PROGRESS**20

- (1) A thorough survey of religious education in the Methodist Episcopal Church in China should be made:
 - a. The Church is turning to religious education with new interest, new hope, and new faith.
 - b. Such a survey might be made in collaboration with the China Christian Educational Association.
- (2) More emphasis should be placed on work with children.
- (3) There should be a closer coordination of the general program and that of the W. F. M. S.
- (4) The work of the Conference Boards of Religious Education should be extended in every possible way.

I. THE LOCAL CHURCH AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Among the leaders of the Methodist Episcopal Church in China there has been in recent years undoubtedly a rising tide of interest in religious education. This increasing interest is manifested in a developing literature on the subject, a growing number of conferences, a steadily enlarging group of Chinese specialists, the frank facing of present deficiencies, and the frequently expressed conviction that ways and means must be found of improving present programs. But when attention is turned from the comparatively small group of leaders to the rank and file a different situation is discerned.

(1) **Religious education is not central in the present programs of the local churches in China.** Evangelism, rather than religious education, is considered to be the real work of the church. "A deep sense of the importance of teaching is lacking." Where there are church day schools religious education is considered to be the task of the school and the teacher often is left to bear the whole responsibility. The preaching service is the only means of religious education for many of the adult members and the pastor does not commonly have a definite educative purpose in preaching. Work with children is not a major consideration with most churches. It is commonly thought that the more important thing is to reach adults. (2) **Lay members of the church do not as a rule know what religious education is.** The term is yet new and strange to them. They are not interested in it because they are not informed about it. Many church members are illiterate. All education is foreign to them. (3) **Many pastors are afraid of religious education.** It is yet something new to them; an innovation; looked upon at least with an attitude of questioning. This is especially true of the older men. Many of them have very few books. Their economic situation makes it impossible for them to keep up with the literature of the day. Much of the literature, even if they had access to it, is over their heads. (4) **The younger preachers do not generally share this attitude.** They are interested in religious education and believe in it. But most of them lack training. They feel the need of a new program but they do not know how and where to begin. They are responsive to leadership. If the Church will supply a definite program they will make use of it. (5) **In most cases where pastors have had special training in religious education they are developing an improved program.** "In certain churches at the more important centers where the pastors have had special training in religious education, educational principles are being effectively applied." (6) **However, in some districts there are no churches with effective programs of religious education.** "I have carefully studied the work of all the churches in and Districts, but I have not found one which has a really effective program of religious education." (7) **A few churches afford striking examples of what may be done where there is a pastor or lay leader of vision, initiative, and ability.** These examples afford conclusive evidence of the readiness of the people to respond to aggressive, forward looking leadership.

(8) **The predominating idea of religious education is still that**

of formal instruction. The question, What do you understand religious education to be? is commonly answered: "Teaching the Bible"; "Sunday school"; "Leading people to know the Bible"; "Imparting knowledge of the Bible and Christian doctrine." Religious education through purposeful activity, through worship, through the reconstruction of experience is not yet a familiar concept. But there are a few leaders who have the broader conception and they are gradually spreading the point of view.

II. RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE HOME. (1) **Christian conceptions of the family are a necessary basis.** In a Christian society the family is the basic unit. Religious education should begin in the home. But unless the Christian concept of the family and of the home prevail religious education will not be highly effective. "Many of our so-called Christian homes are not as truly or as fully Christian as they should be. Perhaps there is no aspect of Christian teaching more important just now than that regarding the Christian conception of the family. Family worship will not mean much if the life of the family is organized on un-Christian lines; if autocracy and inequality between the sexes finds constant illustration in family life." (2) **Many parents do not feel deeply their responsibility for the religious education of their children.** How to lead parents to a sense of their responsibility and to some degree of effectiveness in the religious nurture of their children are among the most difficult problems of the Church. (3) **Family worship is receiving increased emphasis.** In the past the Church has not devoted any large amount of effort to the development of home religion. But a change has been taking place in this particular. "In many places pastors and district superintendents are emphasizing the great importance of family worship." "In North and South Mintsing Districts we have emphasized family worship. Last year we had a special campaign for promoting family worship and Bible reading in the home." "The Kiangsi Conference Committee on Religious Education has decided to make our major emphasis for 1929 religion in the home." (4) **The prevalence of illiteracy is a hindrance.** Many of our adult church members cannot read. A report issued by the American Bible Society gives concrete data. A typical situation is that of 19 churches in Hinghwa where of 1190 members 46 per cent are illiterate. "Due to illiteracy we have not had very good results in promoting family worship." (5) **Additional materials for use in the home are needed.** Some literature is available but it is not abundant and a greater variety is desirable. "The ordinary family cannot be asked to observe family worship without some guide being prepared for their use from the materials of the Bible most valuable for that purpose." "Bible stories for reading and telling to children are needed." (6) **Definite goals in promoting religious education in the home should be adopted.** Possibly these should differ somewhat in the various Conferences. Goals for the present quadrennium are a part of the program (see Program of Religious Education for the Methodist Episcopal Church in China, page 3).

III. SUNDAY SCHOOLS. (1) **A marked decrease in number of Sunday schools has occurred in the last five years.** Approximately the decrease has been three hundred schools. A number of causes are

discerned. Chief of these have been the disturbances due to war and the anti-Christian movement. "Much of this loss is due to unsettled conditions of the country." "In North China many churches have been closed and this has closed the Sunday schools." "The anti-Christian movement has decreased church membership and this has had its effect on Sunday schools." "The cause in part is economic. Our supply of pastors is limited. If the losses are to be overcome we must have more workers. Wherever we have pastors, teachers, or Bible women we have Sunday schools." "The closing of day schools is a principal cause since many of our Sunday schools are almost entirely made up of day-school pupils." (2) **Certain weaknesses and deficiencies are clearly evident.** a. *First and most serious is no trained leadership in a large proportion of the schools.* The superintendent, who is sometimes the pastor, has little knowledge or skill. The program is dull and mechanical. Many teachers only know how to read the lesson and give a little talk which varies slightly from Sunday to Sunday. The difficulty is not merely one of lack of formal training; it is intensified by spiritual coldness and lack of high ideals. b. *Worship is a neglected element.* There is very little appreciation of the place of worship in religious education. An appropriate order of worship and suitable music are lacking in most Sunday schools. Real Chinese hymns, born of the experience of Chinese Christians,—music, instruments, and words, are needed. "The worship service is without aim or plan and is not suited to the ages and interests of the children." "Many churches have no organ." "We do not have buildings that create the atmosphere of worship." c. *Suitable teaching materials are lacking.* "The available materials are insufficient and unsatisfactory. The need for more and better materials is felt generally throughout our Church in China." "The Uniform Lesson materials are very generally used, not because they are considered satisfactory but because they are the least unsatisfactory of those available." The socalled adaptation of these lessons to Chinese life is superficial and inadequate. (3) **There is a growing interest in the Sunday school among many of the leaders of the Church.** This is true both of missionaries and of Chinese. a. *Some pastors see in the Sunday school their largest opportunity.* They are devoting much of their time and effort to it. They are enlisting capable leaders and teachers, training them, and working with them in developing well organized, graded, religiously effective Sunday schools. A conspicuous instance is the work of the Rev. Ling Guong Ing in a small town of the Foochow Conference. He organized a training class with weekly meetings; graded the Sunday school; organized primary, junior, intermediate, young people's, and adult departments; laid special emphasis on service activities, each class having some special service project; and maintained a Sunday afternoon boys' meeting planned and conducted by the boys themselves. Such examples are having a wide influence. (4) **Some remarkable Sunday-school work is being done by schools.** The outstanding examples are Hwa Nan Middle School and Hwa Nan College, Foochow, where for several years about half of the student body of both schools have been engaged in conducting Sunday schools in nearby villages. "At the present time they are conducting Sunday schools in thirteen centers. The groups of students vary in number from five to fifteen and the schools range in enrollment from fifteen

to one hundred and fifty. The schools are conducted systematically; are carefully graded; give special attention to worship; and use hand work and service projects. Twice a year the pupils of all the Sunday schools are brought together in a program of worship and demonstration of the work of the year." (5) **There are numerous hindrances to progress.** a. *The dead weight of untrained leadership, by consensus of opinion, is the first and most serious.* Untrained leaders cannot enthuse or direct others. "The preachers do not yet know how to teach those who should become teachers in the Sunday school." "Always our chief difficulty is the lack of well trained leaders who have real spiritual strength." b. *The handicap of illiteracy is keenly felt.* "So many of our Sunday school pupils do not know how to read." "In our country churches seventy per cent of our members are illiterate." c. *The lack of passion for the development of the Christian life in children and young people is a material factor.* "Too many preachers, not realizing the importance of religious education, take no interest in the Sunday school." "Many church members regard the Sunday school as unimportant compared to the church service." "The offerings in the Sunday schools are commonly used for the support of pastors, leaving no funds for the Sunday school." d. *There is too much tendency to dull routine.* "Leaders get into a rut. Week after week they follow the same mechanical order. There is a natural conservatism which manifests itself in opposition to change and to all new methods." e. *The anti-Christian movement has slowed down all progress.* "The sceptical influence of communism has hit West China very hard. It has retarded the whole Christian movement." (6) **In view of these conditions certain lines of advance are clearly indicated.** Substantial unanimity of judgment exists concerning the points at which attention and effort should be concentrated in the immediate future. a. *First emphasis should be placed upon training the leadership.* The Union Institutions should increase their facilities for the training of professional leaders in religious education, pastors and lay teachers, but particularly teachers of religious education in Middle Schools and persons to fill positions as conference secretaries of religious education and directors of religious education for churches and groups of churches. "We should begin training a corps of teachers who have a sense of vocation." "Everywhere we should form training classes for teachers." "Every Sunday school, if possible, should maintain a training class, meeting on Sunday or a week-day evening, at least twelve weeks each year." "A training conference, or institute offering subjects of the Standard Training Course, should be held if possible in each District each year." b. *Second in importance is the creation of improved curricula.* "It is necessary to concentrate attention and effort on the creation of indigenous Sunday school lessons." "We need to create lesson materials suited to the interests and needs of Chinese children." "Our church should have a standard curriculum for our Sunday schools. A first need is for a satisfactory graded series." Special courses are required: (1) For young people and adults in rural districts; (2) For unschooled children in neighborhood Sunday schools. c. *All of these various materials should be closely related to the life situations of those for whom they are intended.* They should be pupil centered both in the sense of pupil interests and pupil experiences. "Curricula should be based on inherent interests

instead of formal material." Provision must be made for active participation of the pupils, both in intellectual response and in actual undertakings." d. *Demonstration centers should be established.* Efforts are too scattered to accomplish the best results. "There is too much talk on the part of leaders and not enough demonstration. A few centers are required where what can be accomplished under given conditions is demonstrated,—centers to which officers and teachers can be directed for observation of approved practice. (7) However, there are numerous unsolved problems. a. *One such problem concerns departmental and class grading and grouping.* The approximate uniformity of educational qualification presupposed in the grading of American Sunday schools is entirely lacking. There are all degrees of literacy and large numbers who are totally illiterate. Again, many Sunday schools have Christians of some degree of training and other persons who know nothing whatever of Christianity. "In North China an experiment is in progress in urging all Sunday schools to have five departments, as follows: (1) Christians; (2) Enquirers; (3) Non-Christians; (4) Illiterates; (5) Children's Department."

IV. DAILY VACATION CHURCH SCHOOLS. (1) The number of Vacation Schools is not large. The movement is as yet in the period of beginning. The total number held last year under all auspices is estimated at 8,000. (2) They have already proved their worth. a. *They are popular with the children.* The emphasis upon free activity and play appeals strongly. "They seem to be more successful in interesting children in our part of the country than the Sunday schools." b. *They have distinct moral and religious value.* "They are of real value and in some ways the best designed of any part of the present program of religious education." "Those that have been held in this (North China) Conference have been of very great religious and moral value." c. *For young people they provide opportunities of training through service.* In this they help the program of the Church at one of its chief points of weakness. (3) The problem of leadership is acute. a. *What the school is depends wholly upon the teachers.* "The value of the schools has depended almost entirely upon the qualifications of the leaders. Many are not conducted by leaders who have Christian experience; hence there is no religious result. b. *There is a tendency for the schools to become purely secular.* "The secularizing influence is strong in many of these schools." "We need to emphasize that the principal function of the D. V. C. S. is to develop the moral and religious ideas and attitudes of the children." c. *Training groups should be formed among students of the higher schools before vacation.* In many cases plans and training are delayed until the close of the school year with the result that there is insufficient time for preparation. (4) Correlation with the total Church program of religious education is required. a. *There is very little correlation at present.* There has been a tendency for the movement to proceed independently of and unrelated to the programs of the churches. "Added correlation with the total program of our area is needed." (5) **Vacation Schools should be more vigorously promoted by the Conference Boards.** Foochow, Hingwa, and North China Conference Boards have done something in promoting schools but there is large opportunity for extension.

V. CHURCH DAY SCHOOLS: PRIMARY SCHOOLS. (1) The Primary Schools have suffered serious decrease in the past five years. "In our conference we now have very few Primary Schools." "The decrease has been largely due to lack of funds and to the anti-Christian movement." "Decrease is partly due to the fact that it is increasingly the policy of our leaders to pay attention to quality rather than quantity." The effect of the decrease has been a real lessening of our opportunities of reaching the younger generation. (2) In certain respects there has been gain. The Woman's Foreign Missionary Society has accepted increased responsibility for Primary Schools. The result has been improvement in the grade of teachers employed and in effectiveness of supervision. In some cases local churches have taken over the support of schools. (3) There are no satisfactory curriculum materials. a. *The formal teaching of religion is principally through the use of Bible stories.* Commonly the teacher tells the story with the use of pictures and drawings and it is retold by the pupils accompanied by handwork and memorizing. Some use of the catechism persists. b. *In general there is too much emphasis on memory work and not enough on conduct and experience.* "We tried the graded lessons (China Sunday School Union) but our best Chinese teachers said they were poorly translated, most of the stories foreign, and in most cases not understood by the teachers themselves. They have very slight association with the life of the Chinese child." "All available courses are too foreign." "Much of the material is too much like sermons." (4) Certain needs of the Primary Schools are obvious. a. *A more definite policy concerning them should be determined.* "No clear policy exists concerning the establishment and maintenance of Primary Schools." "Primary education is the most uncertain phase of our whole system of Christian education in China at the present time." b. *As in the case of Sunday schools a larger supply of trained teachers is required.* "Here again the great need is trained leadership." "Teachers are needed who can make religion vitally interesting to the children." c. *Graded curriculum materials suited to the needs of the pupils are required.* "We need better methods of teaching and better materials for teaching."

VI. MIDDLE SCHOOLS. (1) A wide range of objective and practice is evident in the teaching of religion in Middle Schools. a. *The number of hours devoted to Bible teaching varies.* Some schools report daily classes in Bible; others three hours of Bible instruction a week. While in most schools the study of the Bible is voluntary, in others it is still required. b. *In some schools the teaching of religion is interpreted in terms of instruction centering in materials.* "The method in our school is explanation of the text by the teacher, with the use of pictures, drawing, and note-book work. Practice work includes teaching in neighborhood Sunday schools and teaching Bible classes in day schools." "In.....Middle School the aim is to personalize, socialize, and nationalize religion. Religion is applied to every phase of student life. Service is emphasized and definite service projects used. Student interests and needs are discovered and made largely determinative." c. *There is an increasing tendency to emphasize chapel services as means of religious education.* In some cases they are voluntary; in others required. In frequency they vary from every day to two days a week. A free, informal chapel service seems

to predominate. In one exceptional instance, once a week there is a ritual service with candles, incense, and special student choir. In another school faculty members answer questions handed in by pupils.

d. *Other means of religious education include numerous extra-curricular activities.* Some schools have voluntary prayer groups. In some a group of students maintain the Morning Watch. Other means include weekly devotional meetings of the Y. M. C. A. and Y. W. C. A.; dramatics and pageantry; a weekly church prayer meeting; discussion groups; and special mass meetings.

(2) **The Middle Schools are not as effective as they should be in training a leadership for the churches.**

a. *The largest part of what is being done in leadership training at present is by the schools.* "The majority of the church workers in this conference are former students in our Middle School." "Most of our pastors and all of our primary teachers come from our schools."

b. *Some schools are rendering exceptional service in training leaders.* Their methods are modern and effective.

c. *Other schools are doing very little.* "Previously our Middle Schools did turn out many workers for the church but in recent years they have failed to do so. Recently, the graduates seem to lack spiritual inspiration and vital experience of Christianity.

d. *There is a growing demand among church leaders that the schools shall become more effective in this particular.* "The schools are training a leadership for the churches only in a general way. They should be made more effective."

"The schools should give more attention to the training of students to become leaders and teachers in the churches."

e. *Various methods of training are used.* They include classroom courses; practice teaching in neighborhood Sunday schools and in Primary Schools; and preaching in nearby villages.

(3) **Well qualified Chinese teachers of religious education in Middle Schools are very scarce.** While the average of leadership in the schools is higher than in the churches, it is not all that is to be desired. "This is one of the weak points in our system. Normal schools should give attention to the training of teachers for religious education."

"We cannot find teachers of earnest Christian character and adequate training. What few we have are needed to administer our schools. Suitable teachers are not being produced by the universities."

(4) **More and better curriculum materials for religious education in Middle Schools are required.** The Middle Schools are perhaps better off in this particular than any other teaching agency but even here thoroughly usable materials are scarce. A rather wide range of textbooks is used. "Courses are needed that will help students in the solution of some of their most perplexing problems."

"Leads for project teaching are needed, with less emphasis on formal instruction."

"Most of the courses now used do not connect up in a creative way with the social needs of the Chinese people in home, community, and nation."

(5) **A need is felt for larger opportunity of influence through association.** "Perhaps our greatest need is for more of personal contact of teachers with students."

"The greatest need is for all faculty members to be earnest and devoted Christians and then to have opportunity for giving special attention to their students. The teacher's personal touch on the students' lives is the most powerful influence."

"Our most acute need is for the personal sharing of life for which we either do not have time or the ability."

VII. YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETIES. (1) The present situation affecting young people's work in the churches is extremely unsatisfactory. a. *There are very few young people in the churches.* Perhaps the greatest weakness of the church is the lack of a hold upon educated young people. The schools attract the young people but the churches do not. b. *Students in the schools are very critical of the Church.* With many this attitude is so extreme that they are indifferent to church attendance and unwilling to connect themselves with any church organization. c. *Many former Epworth Leagues no longer exist.* "At present we have no Epworth League in our District." "We now have only five Epworth Leagues in North China." "Probably there are about seventy Epworth Leagues in China at present, some of them merely nominal." (2) Among many of the leaders there appears to be a lack of enthusiasm for the Epworth League. Specific reasons are given. a. *Its form of organization and program are too foreign.* Chinese young people do not feel that it belongs to them; that it is a Chinese organization. b. *When Epworth Leagues existed in considerable number they were not composed of young people.* "Formerly in two Districts of the Foochow Conference practically every church had an Epworth League but the members were adults, not young people." c. *It is complained that as a rule the Epworth League meeting simply duplicates the morning preaching service.* (3) Yet there is a conviction that a separate organization for young people apart from the Sunday school is needed. "Our churches have no young people's program. I think we require a separate young people's organization." "We must have a young people's movement. In most cases where churches have had marked success in enlisting young people, leading them into an active Christian life, engaging them in the discussion of significant problems and maintaining service programs it has been through some form of separate organization." a. *This is not a unanimous judgment.* Some feel that there is no necessity for a separate organization. "I see no necessity for any other organization than the young people's department of the Church School." "What is needed is a real program of young people's work. We are emphasizing the wrong end when in China we talk continually about organization. Get the churches to include the young people in the church program with an opportunity to make their distinctive contribution." (4) **Churches should organize Young People's Departments.** Many believe this to be the prime need. "Every church, if possible, should maintain a Young People's Department with a comprehensive program of activities." (5) **Distinctive helps on young people's work are needed.** "Today the only material we have for young people's work is an Epworth League Manual prepared three years ago." "Comprehensive service and worship programs for young people and a suitable young people's hymnal are much needed."

VIII. LEADERSHIP TRAINING. (1) A few local churches maintain training classes. As there is no central office for the promotion of leadership training no record of local church classes exists. Such information as is available indicates the existence of training classes of various types in a minimum number of churches. A pastor reports: "During the past year our Sunday-school teachers met regularly once a month to discuss best methods and how to remedy defects." Another: "Every Saturday afternoon a training class of twenty teachers

meets in the church, using a training textbook." It appears that in most instances at present what is called a training class is a meeting of teachers for discussion of the Uniform Lesson for the following Sunday. "In about seventy per cent of the churches of North China Conference there are normal classes of teachers, mostly for the study of next Sunday's lesson." (2) **In some Conferences occasional training institutes are conducted.** a. *The District is usually the area unit for these institutes.* They are attended by pastors, superintendents, and teachers. b. *Some good results are in evidence.* "Those held have helped to create spirit and atmosphere." "The training institutes have stimulated a demand for literature." "Have had very definite, observable effects: schools graded; program changed in the direction of more variety; schools make more use of young people; teaching method changed from preaching to question and discussion." "The effects of the training conferences are seen in the improvement in worship services; in churches being made more attractive; Sunday school secretaries helped to do better work,—beginning to realize the importance of recording attendance, preparing charts of attendance, etc.; the importance of children's worship realized; pastors have learned methods of games and athletics for boys." c. *There is very great need for more of these training institutes and local church training classes.* (See page 10). d. *There is need also for standardization.* This should include determination of conditions for credit, provision for awarding of credits, and diploma recognition. (3) **A beginning has been made in the holding of Summer Schools.** One such school was held in Foo-chow, June 16-26, 1928. "Eleven courses were given on such subjects as Training in Worship, Young People's Work, and Organization and Administration of the Sunday School. One hundred and sixty-four persons registered." (4) **The need for a different type of training Conference is recognized.** In those now held lectures predominate, with some textbook study and class discussion. "It is not enough for people merely to be told what to do. Only as persons in training come to grips with actual problems of their pupils will real teaching skill be developed." (5) **Some special training groups for mothers are maintained.** "In several Districts station classes for women are held where mothers are taught children's prayers, methods of telling stories to children, and methods of moral and religious training." "In several places our W. F. M. S. Chinese women evangelists have started half-day schools for women that they may learn to read and where they are also trained in worship and in methods of family worship." (6) **There is need for additional textbooks, particularly in specialization subjects.** A considerable number of textbooks have been translated into Chinese, including some of the best books available in English, and some of the poorest.

IX. **SPECIAL CURRICULUM PROBLEMS.** (1) General agreement is expressed with the Jerusalem Conference Findings on indigenous curricula. These have been received with much satisfaction. a. *While in theory the idea is very attractive the problem of how to go about creating indigenous curricula is perplexing.* b. *It is recognized that study, research, and experimentation are required.* There has been comparatively little original child study in China up to the present time. Some other background fields, also, have been practically untouched. "The interests, needs, problems, and life situations of Chinese children and

youth must be studied." "An analysis should be made of the most crucial questions and life situations now facing Chinese youth." c. *Centers of original research and study must be established.* A few such centers now exist in some of the higher educational institutions. These institutions need to be encouraged to pursue original research and to make the results available for study. "If this could be done in connection with higher institutions, it would be most valuable, not only in quality of work that might be done but because of valuable training the students will receive and the skill they will develop." d. *Some central group is needed to allocate responsibility and to see that no necessary lines of research and study are left untouched.* "Our great lack at present is a place where there is the necessary personnel to do the research and creative work that is necessary." d. *Laboratories for experimentation and testing in various sections of China and in typical city and village situations are likewise required.* Again, certain educational institutions offer possible facilities. "At Foochow Christian University there is available a splendid 'laboratory' in a Sunday school of about fifty pupils which comes to the campus each Sunday." "William Nast Middle School is anxious to have a share in this work." e. *Chinese scholars of creative ability are needed to lead in the movement.* Deeply Christian men who know Chinese culture and who have thorough educational training are required. Some of the most thoroughly trained Chinese Christian leaders are too Western in their thinking to do this work. Their long residence and study in America have Occidentalized them. f. *The work should be carried forward under inter-denominational auspices.* The task is too great for any one denomination, and the waste of money and effort that would be involved in the denominations proceeding separately, too large. "Granted that there are many of the religious forces working in China that would not be friendly to the type of undertaking proposed, let cooperation be established among those who would cooperate." A promising beginning has been made in the holding of the Hangchow Conference (July, 1928) by the National Christian Council Committee on the Church in Worship and Religious Education. This committee should be encouraged to go forward.

(2) Current progress in curriculum construction should not be interfered with by this long-time process. Some new materials, urgently needed, are now in process and this work should go on. Our Committee on Religious Education is undertaking certain projects (See Program of Religious Education for the Methodist Episcopal Church in China, pages 29-30) which should be diligently pursued.

X. ORGANIZATION FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN CHINA. (1) Progress is being made in the development both of organization and of program. Our denominational organization for religious education has been seriously interfered with by the disturbed conditions of the last few years. Formerly there was a China Council of Religious Education, of which Bishop L. J. Birney was chairman, with a missionary General Secretary and a Chinese Assistant Secretary. The last missionary to serve as General Secretary was W. L. Sanders, who returned to America on furlough in 1926, and was prevented from returning by illness in his family. For some time the Rev. Samson S. Ding served as Associate and Acting Secretary but in the fall of 1927, due chiefly

to the fact that conditions made travel practically impossible and otherwise interfered with any program administered from Shanghai, Bishop Birney, in collaboration with Bishop Brown, assigned Brother Ding to give one-half time to religious education in Fukien Christian University and one-half time to religious education field work in Foochow Conference. At the last session of his conference he was appointed Area Secretary of Religious Education for the Foochow Area.

a. *The authorization and organization of the Committee on Religious Education again provides an All-China organization.* There has been a somewhat widely expressed conviction that some form of central headquarters is necessary. "We recommend that there be a Central Office of Religious Education and a general secretary with residence in Shanghai, whose main work would be to further religious education in the Conferences, and who would also carry on the work of preparation of Sunday-school study material." (Action of Eastern Asia Central Conference, January, 1928). There has also been a conviction that a Central Office with anything like the staff required to carry forward an all-China program is impracticable. The action taken represents a middle course between these two positions. The Executive Board authorized a permanent Committee on Religious Education. The present members of the special committee continue to serve as members of the permanent committee until their successors shall be elected. (See Program of Religious Education, pages 7-8). Thus a central directing organization is constituted and the expense of a central office and additional salaried officers avoided. An Executive Committee of seven, to meet at least once each year, is the administrative ad-interim body.

(b) *Conference Boards of Religious Education are organized in nine conferences as follows:*

Central China Conference Board of Religious Education. An active organization. Has held some Distinct Training Institutes. A full-time Conference Secretary is needed and is very much desired.

Chengtu Conference Board of Religious Education. Is organized with a chairman, a secretary, and sub-committees on Sunday School Literature; Daily Vacation Bible School; Music, and Translation of Ritual. It also has a Special Committee on Curriculum and Methods to cooperate with the faculty of religion of Union University, Chengtu, in the production of graded courses, and in other ways. At the recent sessions of the Conferences, held in January, 1929, General Secretaries of Religious Education were elected for the Conference and for the Women's Conference.

Chungking Conference Board of Religious Education. Has a chairman, and a Conference Secretary of Religious Education on half time. A summer Training Conference is held at Chungking High School; a training class for teachers is maintained, also at Chungking, with a Demonstration Sunday school of about one hundred pupils.

Foochow Conference Board of Religious Education is organized and holds an annual meeting. An Executive Committee of seven members meets monthly. An effective program is being carried on. Each District has a District Board, some with part-time workers.

Hinghwa Conference has a general Administrative Board with four departments, one of which is religious education. The department has a standing Committee on Curriculum and special committees as

needs arise. Mrs. W. N. Brewster, Conference Secretary of Religious Education, divides her time between religious education and evangelism. There are three full-time Chinese Directors of Religious Education for five districts.

Kiangsi Conference Board of Religious Education, at the last session of Conference was newly organized. All religious education interests, including those of the Women's Conference center in this board. An aggressive program has been planned, centering for the present year in religion in the home. Two Training Conferences are to be held during the summer to train leaders for training classes which it is hoped may be organized in each church in Kiukiang and Nanchang and where possible in other centers. Fred R. Brown is giving part time as Nanchang District Secretary of Religious Education.

North China Board of Religious Education is thoroughly organized with nineteen members, twelve from the North China Conference and seven from the Women's Conference. The Rev. I. H. Liu is the efficient, full-time Secretary of Religious Education. Each District has an active Committee on Religious Education, and each circuit has a Circuit Council. Both two-day Institutes and five-day Standard Training Conferences are held as frequently as possible, at least one in each district annually.

South Fukien Conference Board of Religious Education is organized and has a full-time Secretary of Religious Education, Rev. Yu Suan. Seven night schools for young people are maintained, the local churches supporting these by special contributions. In teaching reading and writing, religion also is taught. Several institutes for pastors are planned for this year.

Yenping Conference Board of Religious Education has five members, three appointed by the Yenping Conference and two by the Women's Conference. A two-week's Training Institute is planned for each District this year, devoted to religious education and evangelism. Following these, the pastors each with two or three lay members are expected to repeat the program in circuit institutes.

Foochow Area. The Foochow Area consisting of the Foochow, Yenping, Hinghwa, and South Fukien Conferences, has an Area Executive Committee on Religious Education with two members from each Conference Board, and a full-time Secretary of Religious Education, the Rev. S. S. Ding.

c. *The programs of the Conference Boards represent a gradual growth in effectiveness.* "Our Conference Board program is improving each year. There are many difficult problems and it needs time to solve even a few of them." "The Conference Board is very useful. All the members have too many other interests to give the time to the work that it should have." "Our Conference Boards need guidance. They are all young and few of the members are trained in religious education." "The work is becoming more practical. In the past much of it has been too doctrinaire, too theoretical, but there is a tendency to remedy this defect."

(2) **A more complete Conference Board organization is recommended.**
a. *The general Committee on Religious Education recommends that each Conference Board shall have the following Standing Committees:* (a) Committee on Children's Work and Religion in the Home; (b) Committee on Young People's Work; (c) Committee on Adult Work; (d) Com-

mittee on Curriculum and Literature. (See Program, pages 8-9). A general Committee on Curriculum and Literature is also recommended to consist of the chairman of the conference committees. When these recommendations shall have been carried out there will be available a reasonably complete organization for a comprehensive working program. *b. Each Conference Board should have a full-time Chinese Secretary.* Only thoroughly capable, well trained men should be chosen. The carrying out of the program that has been adopted will depend upon the leadership of the Conference Boards.

XI. INTERDENOMINATIONAL COOPERATION IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION. (1) **The Methodist Episcopal Church in China stands for cooperation.** The action of the Eastern Asia Central Conference (January, 1928) should be noted. It reads: "We recommend that this Board or Committee take definite steps to study our whole program of religious education, cooperating so far as possible with other churches and with the National Christian Council in such study and in working out the solutions to the problems." The necessity for cooperation is stated by the Committee on Religious Education (See Program, page 27). (2) **The functions of the National Christian Council and of the China Christian Educational Association are limited.** a. *The former interprets its functions as advisory only.* It does not undertake to act for the churches officially. At present it does not seem disposed to extend its field of action. b. *The field of the latter is restricted to the schools.* Within this field it is rendering an increasingly valuable service. Its full-time Secretary of Religious Education, Dr. C. S. Miao, is able and aggressive. His work is of value to all the Churches. (3) **The China Sunday School Union is rendering very limited service.** a. *Its policies and plans are not determined by representatives of the Churches.* While it has a General Committee, some of the members of which are officially appointed, this Committee does not function effectively in determining policies and plans. "The Committee has no real power. It is impotent. It does not deal with the actual work of the Union. The agenda is prepared in advance and there is no chance for change in the meetings or even for discussion." b. *Its lesson materials are unsatisfactory.* The testimony of our Methodist leaders on this point is practically unanimous. No one is satisfied with them. "The materials are unsatisfactory so far as most of the teachers are concerned." "They are very largely considered unsatisfactory in our Conference." "The materials are not satisfactory at all. Content and printing both are unsatisfactory." "The policy is translation from English with some adaptation. The translating is done by a Chinese but without touch with the Sunday school." "We use the materials because we cannot get anything else. They are not satisfactory." c. *It is rendering practically no service in leadership training and the promotion of improved methods.* Some years ago it was active in holding institutes but this type of service receives very little emphasis in the present program. (4) **The suggestion has been made that a new interdenominational organization be formed.** This for those phases of religious education that are not now cared for by any existing interdenominational agency, such as the creation of indigenous curricula (see page 15); the holding of interdenominational Summer Training Schools for Leaders; the promotion of interdenomi-

national City Training Schools and other forms of training; and the promotion of interdenominational phases of children's work and young people's work. Such an organization would necessarily be made up of those denominations that are committed to a progressive, forward-looking program of religious education.

XII. IN THE INTEREST OF PROGRESS. Various suggestions of needed emphases and lines of progress have been made under the various specific heads. In conclusion, some general recommendations are offered. (1) **A thorough survey of religious education in the Methodist Episcopal Church in China should be made.** The questionnaire, returns from which constitute the principal basis of this report, was merely a preliminary Inquiry. a. *The Church is turning to religious education with new interest, new hope, new faith.* Policies and plans of far reaching significance are being formulated. How much is definitely known concerning the effects of the agencies and methods used in the past? To what extent have the means that have won some to the Christian life alienated others? What are the actual, measurable effects in thinking and in conduct of our present processes of religious education? What are the results of such experiments as have been made with different types of program in worship, and in service? These are a few of the lines of investigation that should be pursued. b. *It is possible that such a survey might be made in collaboration with the China Christian Educational Association.* "We should cast in our lot with the C. C. E. A., which has long had just such a survey in view. We cannot afford to undertake this alone."

(2) **More emphasis should be placed on work with children.** Proportionately too much time is being given to work with adults. It is probable that the W. F. M. S. workers are giving an undue amount of time to the older women. There is unlimited opportunity in China for reaching and for enlisting children. Given the vision and sense of responsibility, and trained leaders and teachers who have a spirit of fellowship with children and who know the principles of religious education the Church of Christ can be builded in the minds and hearts of uncounted multitudes of China's children. (3) **There should be a closer coordination of the general program and that of the W. F. M. S.** In China as in other fields there is evidence of wasted time, effort, and funds through duplication and overlapping. Movement in the direction of correlation and coordination is in progress and this should be encouraged. (4) **The work of the Conference Boards of Religious Education should be encouraged, supported, and extended in every possible way.** The Conference Board is the most effective agency for building the program in terms of the problems and needs of the local churches. Every Conference Board should have a well trained, full-time Chinese Secretary of Religious Education. At as early a date as practicable each Conference Board should be convened for a period of not less than twelve days for an intensive study and discussion of the problems of religious education of the Conference and for the formulation of policies and plans.



